

Pandemic Influenza

The Local Perspective

Jonathan E. Fielding M.D. M.P.H.

Director of Public Health and Health Officer, DHS

Los Angeles County

“The pandemic clock is ticking, we just don’t know what time it is”

E. Marcuse

What is a flu pandemic?

- Infectious disease with no immunity in the population
- Local crisis in every part of the world
- Each locality must respond without expectation of mutual aid
- In contrast to typical natural disasters – threatening the physical infrastructure -- an influenza pandemic may also pose significant threats to the human infrastructure responsible for critical community services
- Initial reliance on traditional public health approaches
- Goals:
 - Slow spread
 - Reduce adverse impact
 - Preserve social and economic order

Situation and Assumptions

- Future pandemics are likely; probably inevitable
- Strain could emerge in CA or elsewhere in US
- Pandemic likely to have several waves in each area
- Threats to economic, social and health care infrastructures
- Preventive/therapeutic measures- short supply
- Shortages in health care capacity, personnel and supplies

Potential Impact of Pandemic Flu in Los Angeles



Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

- Serves as a guides for preparation and response to an outbreak and/or pandemic of influenza (flu) in LAC.
- Follows the general guidance of Federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the California DHS pandemic flu plans.
- Will continue to evolve as new information and guidelines become available.
- Is Integrated into the LAC Public Health All Hazards Emergency Response Plan
- Summary at lapublichealth.org

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

- Identifies coordinating and cooperating agencies and their respective response roles
- Actions based on the phases of pandemic flu as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The essential components of the LAC DHS Pandemic Flu Plan are Surveillance, Laboratory, Vaccine Delivery, Antivirals, Strategies to Limit Transmission, Communications, and Emergency Response

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ SURVEILLANCE

- The Acute Communicable Disease Control program (ACDC) regularly monitors flu and flu-like illness activity through a wide array of surveillance methods.
- If there is a flu outbreak or pandemic flu in LAC, enhanced surveillance, notification, and response will be implemented

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ LABORATORY

- Laboratory testing, surveillance and data collection, communication issues and laboratory surge capacity are addressed for each WHO pandemic phase.
- LAC lab one of two in CA to perform H₅N₁ testing
- Laboratory-based surveillance will identify the predominant circulating types, subtypes, and strains of flu, aid clinical judgment, and help guide treatment decisions.

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ VACCINE DELIVERY

- Vaccine unlikely to be available in the early stages; lag time for availability may depend on updated manufacturing processes.
- DHHS guidelines: likely federal control over the distribution of vaccine according to pre-determined grouping and risks.
- LAC's Pandemic Plan will implement, and, when appropriate, locally adapt these guidelines. The LAC Plan contains provisions for vaccine storage and distribution.

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ ANTIVIRAL MEDICATIONS

- Current CDC recommendations for the priority use of limited supplies of antiviral medications (e.g., oseltamivir [Tamiflu]) are primarily for treatment,
- Changing information about the efficacy and safety of antiviral medications, along with concerns about the emergence of potential resistance, will require a flexible and evolving approach to the use of these medications in a pandemic flu setting.
- The LAC DHS has stockpiled some antiviral medications for immediate use in the event of a flu pandemic.

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

- STRATEGIES TO LIMIT TRANSMISSION
 - Isolation and quarantine
 - may have limited use in a flu pandemic due to
 - the short incubation period of influenza, (1-4 days)
 - flu transmission can occur before the onset of symptoms.
 - possible role in the initial identification of the first cases and outbreaks.

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ STRATEGIES TO LIMIT TRANSMISSION

- Additional voluntary isolation and quarantine measures
 - Home isolation of cases for a minimum of 7 days after disease onset.
 - Monitoring of contacts for fever and respiratory symptoms for 5 days after exposure.
 - Asking health care workers with a fever and have been previously exposed to not go to work.
 - Closure of schools and work places with high incidence of influenza-like illness (ILI)
 - Community-wide suspension of large public gatherings.

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ STRATEGIES TO LIMIT TRANSMISSION

- Overall, the most effective tool for reducing disease and controlling transmission in the population will be an aggressive public information campaign emphasizing:
 - hand washing
 - cough and sneeze etiquette
 - reduced social interactions
 - guidelines for those being cared for at home.

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ COMMUNICATIONS

- Key messages that can be used consistently to instill public confidence and generate an appropriate response to minimize risk and ensure a strong and rapid response.
- Key audiences and communication channels: the general public and major subpopulations, vulnerable population groups, hospitals, healthcare providers, businesses, educational institutions, policy makers, and public health officials.
- Community leaders representing multicultural and socio-economic backgrounds in LAC will be informed and included in these communication efforts.

Los Angeles County

Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- The Health Officer will be notified when a novel (new strain) flu virus with pandemic potential has reached LAC.
- Health Officer, in collaboration with the Emergency Medical Services (EMS), may call upon County/City agencies and others to assist with the management of the public health response. This may include
 - law enforcement
 - fire departments
 - social service and mental health agencies
 - local governments
 - Educational institutions
 - nongovernmental agencies
 - businesses

Los Angeles County Pandemic Influenza Plan

■ EMERGENCY RESPONSE

■ HOSPITAL SURGE CAPACITY

- Need for hospital beds will exceed the number of beds available.
- Illness among health care workers likely to exacerbate staffing shortages
- The LAC DHS Plan identifies key components of surge capacity and the ability to meet an increased demand.

Increased capacity can be generated by

- early discharge of patients
- transferring patients to lower levels of care
- canceling elective procedures and redirecting staff to the inpatient units most affected
- possibly suspending nurse staffing ratios
- extending work hours

Intensive Efforts Underway to Address:

- Surge Capacity
 - Hospitals
 - Shelters
 - Providers
 - Staffing
- Special/Vulnerable Populations
- Communications
 - Internal
 - Communities
 - Providers
 - Schools
 - Businesses
- Continuity of Operations
 - Governmental
 - Infrastructure

Questions

